

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
    INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15  
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R 101445Z MAY 78  
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6751  
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN  
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON  
AMEMBSSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA  
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO  
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 1501

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: SPOP, PINS, CVIS, GY  
SUBJECT: GUYANESE EXODUS: A DILEMMA FOR THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT

1. IN THE PAST SIX MONTHS THE WORK "EXODUS" HAS BECOME PART OF THE GUYANESE POLITICAL LEXICON. INCREASINGLY OF LATE, GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA (GOG) POLITICAL LEADERS HAVE BEEN FULMINATING AT "WEAK-KNEED GUYANESE" WHO DO NOT STAY TO HELP "BUILD" SOCIALIST GUYANA. OPPOSITION SPOKESMEN CLAIM GUYANESE ARE LEAVING BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF OPPORTUNITY AND DECLINING STANDARD OF LIVING THE BURNHAM GOVERNMENT HAS PROVIDED THE POPULACE.

2.THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT GUYANESE ARE LEAVING IN INCREASING NUMBERS FOR GREENER PASTURES IN THE US. WE HAVE PROCESSED THE SURPRISING FIGURE OF 6,293 IMMIGRANT VISA CASES FROM OCTOBER, 1977 TO APRIL 30, 1978 AS OPPOSED TO 3,629 CASES FOR THE CORRESPONDING PERIOD OF 1976-1977. OUR NON-IMMIGRANT VISA APPLICATIONS ARE ALSO UP 1,000 FROM 3,625 TO 4,640  
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FOR THE SAME PERIOD. WE FURTHER UNDERSTAND FROM OUR CANADIAN AND BRITISH COLLEAGUES THAT THEY ALSO ARE DOING A BRISK BUSINESS IN APPLICATIONS FROM GUYANESE WHO WANT TO LEAVE. PRECISE NUMBERS OF GUYANESE ENTERING SURINAM ARE ALWAYS DIFFICULT TO COME BY BECAUSE OF THE POROUS NATURE OF THAT BORDER BUT WE HAVE HEARD THAT THEY TOO ARE UP DRAMATICALLY.

3. APPARENTLY MANY GUYANESE HAVE GIVEN UP ANY HOPE OF IMPROVING THEIR LOT IN GUYANA AND NO LONGER BELIEVE THAT THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT IS CAPABLE OF TURNING THE DEPRESSED ECONOMIC SITUATION AROUND. ADDED TO THAT IS THE GROWING BELIEF IN THE MINDS OF MANY GUYANESE THAT PRIMIN BURNHAM HAS DECIDED TO REMAIN IN OFFICE AT ALL COSTS, THAT HE HAS DECIDED TO FIND A QUASI-LEGAL WAY OUT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS DUE TO BE HELD BY OCTOBER 25 OF THIS YEAR AND THAT THE DEVICE CHOSEN IS THE REFERENDUM PROPOSAL RAMMED THROUGH THE PARLIAMENT ON APRIL 10 WHICH, IF APPROVED, WILL GIVE THE RULING PNC POWER TO REPLACE ALL OR PART OF THE EXISTING CONSTITUTION BY A SIMPLE TWO-THIRDS VOTE OF THE PARLIAMENT (WHICH THE GOVERNMENT COMMANDS). MANY OF THE GUYANESE WHO ARE OPTING OUT, FEEL THERE IS NO WAY TO OPPOSE BURNHAM POLITICALLY.

4. ONE SENIOR MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICIAL CHARACTERIZED THE ATTITUDE OF THE GUYANESE AS ONE OF "HOPELESSNESS" ABOUT THEIR PRESENT SITUATION. AS OUR CONSULAR OFFICERS CAN ATTEST, THIS MIGRATION CUTS ACROSS RACIAL LINES AND INCLUDES SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE JUDICIARY, THE COMMANDER OF THE GUYANA DEFENSE FORCE, OFFICIALS OF THE GOVERNMENT AT ALL LEVELS, PROMINENT BUSINESS LEADERS, FARMERS, AND TECHNICIANS, AND IN SHORT, THE TYPE OF PEOPLE THIS COUNTRY CAN ILL AFFORD  
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TO LOSE.

5. THIS SITUATION THEN HAS SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND THE COUNTRY, AS IMPORTANT NUMBERS OF ITS MOST PRODUCTIVE CITIZENS OPT FOR THE "ESCAPE HATCH" OF EMIGRATION RATHER THAN STAY IN GUYANA. NO COUNTRY

CAN LOSE APPROXIMATELY 2PCT OF ITS POPULATION WITHOUT SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT. (THIS ESTIMATE IS BASED ON THE CURRENT NUMBER OF GUYANESE LISTED FOR IMMIGRATION AT THE US, UK AND CANADIAN CONSULAR OFFICES.) HOW THE GOG WILL RESPOND TO THIS PROBLEM REMAINS TO BE SEEN. FOR THE MOMENT THEY APPEAR TO HAVE NO ANSWER.  
BURKE

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NNN



## Message Attributes

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